Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Cooperative threat reduction

Working paper submitted by Italy

During the general debate and the cluster statements, many delegations — including the Presidency of the European Union — have highlighted the importance of the international co-operative process which goes under the name of "Co-operative Threat Reduction" (CTR) and its relevance for the NPT review process.

The following additional remarks and indications can be made on this issue:

1) The reductions of nuclear weapons through plurilateral, bilateral and unilateral nuclear disarmament and arms limitation treaties and processes in the past decades have brought to the attention of the international community that disarmament engagements are meaningless unless the weapons involved are either physically destroyed or appropriately disposed of. During the past decades the enormous technical and financial problems connected with the actual elimination of nuclear arsenals, have come to the surface: the CTR is a multilateral effort aimed at addressing those problems.

2) In the past decade, the United States, the Russian Federation, Japan, Canada, the European Union (and many of its member States on a national basis), as well as other Countries have worked together — under the CTR initiative — to secure and dismantle nuclear, biological and chemical weapons materials, carriers and infrastructure. The culminating moment of this initiative took place in Kananaskis, Canada in June 2002 when the leaders of the G8 Countries announced a "Global Partnership" against the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Participants at the Summit pledged to raise up to 20 billion US dollars over the following ten years to address these WMD threats.

3) At a time in which nuclear proliferation is a growing threat to international peace and security and the risk that terrorists may seek to possess either fissile material or even nuclear weapons adds a new dimension to this threat, the CTR is a significant, additional way to address the problem of nuclear proliferation and disarmament.

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4) The nuclear component of the CTR initiative is relevant to the NPT review process and strengthens the Treaty both under article 6 and under article 1. The de-activation of thousands of deployed nuclear warheads under this programme are effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race and to nuclear disarmament under the NPT as well as the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference and the Decisions and Resolution of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference.

5) Many of the measures undertaken under the CTR, such as dismantlement of nuclear submarines, efforts to convert military stockpiles into a form no longer usable in nuclear weapons, respond to the objectives laid down in articles 1 and 2 of the Treaty.

6) The CTR deals with highly sensitive materials and equipments; most of them have traditionally been held secret by countries which had, in the past, confronted each other. The fact that these materials have now become the object of international co-operation enhances transparency and confidence. It thus strengthens trust between states and facilitates the cessation of the manufacture of nuclear weapons as foreseen in the preambular part of the Treaty.

7) The CTR has accelerated the nuclear arms reduction process, facilitated the accession to the NPT by a number of countries, thus strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

8) The CTR process, and its relevance for disarmament and non proliferation, have been presented to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva in January, 2004: other countries may join this initiative both as donors and as recipients.

A special attention should be given, within the NPT review process, to the "Co-operative Threat Reduction": the Preparatory Committee should recommend to the Review Conference to welcome and acknowledge the CTR process as an instrument of effective nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.